

ARTICLE APPENDED
ON PAGE 5-A

WASHINGTON TIMES

4 November 1986

Ex-CIA agent thinks libel award will end accusations in JFK death

By Bill Gertz
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Former CIA agent David Atlee Phillips said a British libel ruling in his favor last month should halt a campaign of slander charging him with involvement in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963.

"I consider it the end of a disinformation campaign," Mr. Phillips said in an interview yesterday. "It's been a trying six years and it is easy to understand why a person with a large family finds it difficult to field questions from children about such a subject. Now, however, it is with a tremendous sense of relief that I'm able to point to the record."

Mr. Phillips once ran the CIA's Latin American clandestine services branch.

On Oct. 7, Britain's High Court agreed with Mr. Phillips that ex-

cerpts of Anthony Summers' 1980 book — "Conspiracy: Who Killed President Kennedy?" — which appeared in The London Observer newspaper six years ago, implied Mr. Phillips, operating under the pseudonym "Maurice Bishop," was a CIA case officer for Kennedy assassin Lee Harvey Oswald.

The court ruled The Observer must pay Mr. Phillips' legal costs and damages, which have not been disclosed. The damages were described by informed sources as amounting to tens of thousands of dollars.

The first part of the disinformation campaign, Mr. Phillips said, began in 1980 when Saul Landau, a filmmaker with the leftist Institute for Policy Studies in Washington wrote an article in a European publication linking him to the 1976 car bombing of Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier. Mr. Letelier was a sus-

pected Cuban intelligence agent, according to intelligence sources.

In February, Mr. Phillips won a libel suit in U.S. federal court against the three authors and publisher of the 1980 book "Death in Washington." The book charged that Mr. Phillips, as chief of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, was involved in the Letelier assassination.

"Now the second part of the campaign by a number of writers, that I was somehow involved in Kennedy's assassination, has been laid to rest," Mr. Phillips said of the British court ruling.

Stephen Nathan, The Observer's legal counsel, told United Press International the newspaper "unreservedly apologized for the distress caused and finally accepted that Mr. Phillips was in no way involved in the assassination."

A retraction in The Observer on Oct. 12 stated extracts from the book "could have been read to suggest that Mr. Phillips was himself involved in a conspiracy relation to the [Kennedy] assassination and in the suppression of evidence about it.

"There was never any evidence to support such a suggestion and ... Mr. Phillips was not in any way involved in the assassination," the newspaper stated.

The Observer articles cited Mr. Phillips' testimony before a 1979 House investigation of the Kennedy assassination in a way that suggested the former CIA agent was involved in an assassination conspiracy, said Michael Tugendhat, Mr. Phillips' British attorney.

Mr. Phillips said the false allegations about the Kennedy assassination were made by several authors and publishers. "And none contacted me before publication to give me the chance to respond," he said.

Ned Dolan, president of Challenge Inc., a group describing itself as "an intelligence officers' legal action fund," said the latest ruling in Britain vindicates Mr. Phillips of the false charges.